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Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 006146

EXDIS

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QUOTE

S E C R E T STATE 006146

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE ARMS CONTROL

1. WE HAVE LONG BEEN CONCERNED AT VIRTUALLY UNLIMITED FLOW OF ARMS INTO LEBANON FOR USE OF POLITICAL AND SECTARIAN

FIGHTING GROUPS. WE BELIEVE IT IS NECESSARY AT THIS TIME TO MAKE FURTHER EXPLORATIONS INTO POSSIBILITY OF CUTTING DOWN ARMS FLOW TO BOTH SIDES, WHILE RECOGNIZING THAT
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DIFFICULTIES OF CONTROLLING

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CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRAFFIC ARE
IMMENSE AND THAT PRESSURES FROM ALL FACTIONS WITHIN LEBAN-
ON FOR ARMS ARE UNLIKELY TO ABATE.

2. WE HAVE DISCUSSED WITH SYRIANS POSSIBILITY OF THEIR
RESTRICTING ARMAMENTS SLOW TO MOSLEM GROUPS, MOST OF WHICH
PASS THROUGH SYRIA. THE SYRIANS POINTED TO INFLUX OF ARMS
BY OTHER MEANS TO LEBANESE CHRISTIAN GROUPS AND, IN THE
ABSENCE OF CURBS ON THAT FLOW, DECLINED TO TAKE ANY ACTION
THEMSELVES.

3. MOST OF THE ARMS FOR CHRISTIANS COME FROM COMMERCIAL

SOURCES IN WESTERN EUROPE, NOTABLY BELGIUM, ALTHOUGH ARMS
HAVE ALSO REPORTEDLY COME, AT LEAST INDIRECTLY, FROM WEST
GERMANY, FRANCE AND ITALY. TO ENABLE US TO WEIGH ACCURATELY
POSSIBILITY OF ARMS CONTROL, AND LAY GROUNDWORK FOR FURTHER
STEPS, WE NEED TOSOUND OUT KEY WEST EUROPEAN ALLIES
INFORMALLY.

4. WE ARE NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT ALLIES WILL CONSIDER THAT
ANYTHING EFFECTIVE CAN BE DONE OR, EVEN ASSUMING THEIR
GOOD WILL, THAT ALLIED EFFORTS WOULD STEM THE FLOW OF ARMS.
THIS APPROACH IS, HOWEVER, A STARTING POINT. DEPENDING ON
RESPONSES, WE MIGHT WANT TO GO TO SYRIANS AGAIN AND TO
CONSIDER APPROACHING USSR.

5. ACCORDINGLY, YOU SHOULD APPROACH HOST GOVERNMENTS AT
APPROPRIATELY HIGH LEVEL AND RAISE QUESTION OF POSSIBLE
CONTROL OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS FLOW TO LEBANON, DRAWING ON
THE FOLLOWING TALKING POINTS:

--WE ARE EXTREMELY CONCERNED AT PROSPECTS OF VIOLENCE IN
LEBANON, WHICH COULD ENDANGER STABILITY IN MIDDLE EAST
AND DRAW SYRIA AND ISRAEL INTO ANOTHER ARAB/ISRAELI WAR.

--ARMS ARE CONTINUING TO FLOW INTO THE COUNTRY, BOTH BY
SEA AND OVERLAND. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THESE ARE COMING
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MAINLY FROM ARAB AND EUROPEAN SOURCES.

--WE OURSELVES HAVE STOPPED ISSUING LICENSES FOR ANY ARMS
EXPORT TO NON-GOVERNMENTAL RECIPIENTS IN LEBANON.

--WE HAVE BEEN CONSIDERING WHETHER IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE
TO PROPOSE SOME FORM OF INTERNATIONAL RESTRAINT ON ARMS

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SALES TO PRIVATE GROUPS IN LEBANON WHICH WOULD APPLY TO ALL PARTIES.

--WE RECOGNIZE THE EXTREME DIFFICULTY OF ACHIEVING SUCH

RESTRAINT, GIVEN BITTERNESS OF THE CONFLICT, VARIETY OF FACTIONS IN LEBANON, AND RANGE OF EXTERNAL SUPPLIERS. NEVERTHELESS, WE WANT TO EXPLORE ALL POSSIBLE AVENUES, HOWEVER DIFFICULT.

--WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR VIEWS ON WHETHER POSSIBILITY OF LIMITING THE ARMS FLOW SHOULD BE EXPLORED AND WHAT MODALITIES YOU FEEL MIGHT BE HOST USEDUL IF THIS IS PURSUED.

--RANGE OF POSSIBLE MEASURES COULD INCLUDE COORDINATED OR JOINT STATEMENTS DEPLORING ARMS SUPPLIES TO FACTIONS IN LEBANON, SERIES OF UNDERTAKINGS TO CURB SHIPMENTS TO PRIVATE GROUPS IN LEBANON, OR MULTILATERAL COMMITMENT TO BLOCK SUCH ARMS SHIPMENTS FROM COUNTRIES JOINING IN SUCH A COMMITMENT.

--WE ARE MAKING SIMILAR APPROACHES TO EUROPEAN GOVERN-MENTS BELIEVED TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT LEBANESE SITUATION SITUATION AND WHICH MAY BE ABLE TO INTERRUPT OR CURB ARMS FLOW FROM COMMERCIAL SOURCES.

--ANY EFFORT TO CONTROL ARMS FLOW WOULD HAVE TO INVOLVE SYRIA. IF THE RESPONSES ARE ENCOURAGING, WE WOULD CON-SIDER APPROACHING THE SYRIANS AS NEXT STEP. KISSINGER

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